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AUTHOR Hawkinson, Bruce
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ABSTRACT

One in a series of ten mini-manuals on office communication proofreading, this booklet for business and office students provides instruction in the use of commas, dashes, and parentheses. Included are terminal and specific objectives, punctuation rules and related information, and tasks for practice. A test over the information presented concludes the manual. (Test answers are included in the teacher's manual for the series--CE 008 821.) (EM)

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SHORT STOPS

An Office Education Mini Curriculum Manual on COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES

By BRUCE HAWKINSON, Editor-Writer
Sandia Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico

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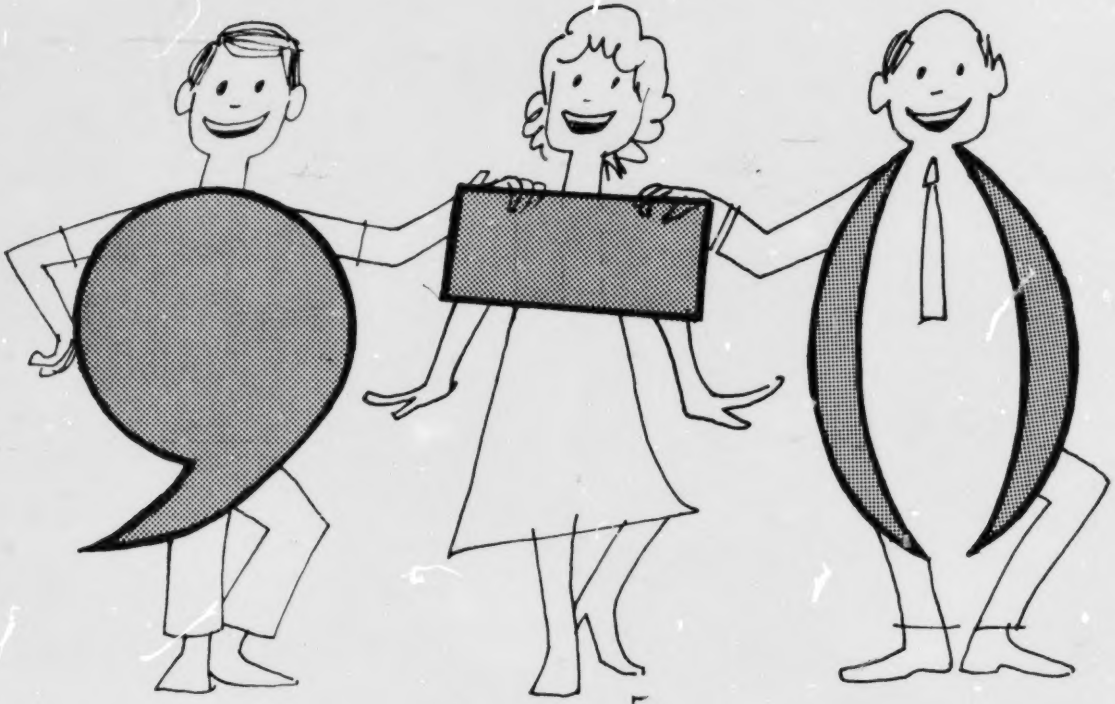
What you'll find in this booklet:

The point of this Booklet (TERMINAL OBJECTIVE)	PAGE 1
Specifically, what you have to be able to do (SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES)	PAGE 2
Things to know about comma, dashs, and parentheses (INFORMATION	PAGE 5
Tasks (PRACTICE ON ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES)	PAGE 27
The Test	PAGE 31



THE POINT OF THIS BOOKLET
(i.e., Terminal Objective)

When you are able to show that you know – and can apply – all the rules given in this booklet for use of commas, dashes, and parentheses – that means, when you've studied the objectives, read the INFO pages carefully, done the TASKS successfully, and gotten at least 85 per cent on the TEST at the end – you'll be able to put commas, dashes, and parentheses in the right places on any job you get.

OBJECTIVE
OEM4-2

SPECIFICALLY, WHAT YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DO:
(i.e., Specific Objectives)

When you finish with this booklet, these are the things you'll know, or will be able to do:

1. Identify from given sentences those that are generally true of comma, dash, and parentheses use.
2. Match definitions to the terms: *clause, coordinating conjunction, series, essential, non-essential, set off, appositive.*
3. Identify in a given list of sentences correct and incorrect use of commas with coordinating conjunctions.
4. Insert commas correctly in given sentences containing series constructions.
5. Insert commas correctly in given sentences containing two or more adjectives modifying the same noun.
6. Identify among given sentences containing addresses, dates, or measurements those that are correctly punctuated with commas.
7. Identify among given sentences those that contain correctly punctuated introductory elements.
8. Insert commas correctly in given sentences containing appositives.

9. Identify among given sentences containing non-essential clauses those in which the clause should be set off by commas.
10. Distinguish among given sentences those in which specified interrupters should be set off by means of commas, dashes, and/or parentheses.
11. Identify among given sentences that may contain direct address those that are correctly punctuated.
12. Identify among given sentences containing direct quotations those that are correctly punctuated.
13. Identify among given sentences containing omitted verbs those that are correctly punctuated.
14. Insert commas in given sentences where needed only for purposes of clarity.
15. Identify among given sentences containing listings those that use the dash correctly.
16. State what to do when in doubt as to whether to insert a comma.

Where are we going?
Where are we going?
Where are we going?
Where are we going?
Where are we going?
Where are we going?
Where are we going?
Where are we going?

1st THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Commas, dashes, and parentheses separate parts of sentences to help make sentences clear.

That's easy to say, but it isn't easy to know just where commas, dashes and parentheses should or shou!d not go in a sentence. The rest of this booklet will give you some new words to add to your vocabulary, and fourteen (14) rules that can make you an authority on the use of these *short stops* (i.e., commas, dashes, and parentheses) in your job.

The comma is one of the most frequently used punctuation marks. And dashes and parentheses are often used to substitute for commas, becauses dashes and parentheses, like commas, also separate parts of sentences to help make sentences clear. (NOTE: Commas and dashes can separate, or set off, either essential or non-essential sentence parts; usually, parentheses are used to set off non-essential parts, like *asides* or *afterthoughts* or *digressions.* It's bad enough to use too many commas, but it's even worse (if you want to write clear sentences) to use too many dashes or parentheses.

Following are some examples to show how these *short stops* help make sentences clear.

1.

WITHOUT SHORT STOPS	WITH SHORT STOPS
Hungry now the lean tall wolf a fierce one sees me then gazes in fact stares sniffs and it seems salivates but though I try I can't because of the ropes harsh and unyielding scream run or climb the tree.	Hungry now, the lean, tall wolf (a fierce one) sees me, then gazes – in fact, stares – sniffs, and, it seems, salivates, but, though I try, I can't (because of the ropes, harsh and unyielding) scream, run, or climb the tree.

2. This sentence could be spoken to a stupid person you were about to rob:

As you know nothing, nothing whatsoever can keep me from taking your money.

But this sentence could be spoken to a reasonably intelligent person you were about to rob:

As you know, nothing – nothing whatsoever – can keep me from taking your money.

Yet both sentences have exactly the same words.

3. Look at the difference in meaning between these two:

We fill prescriptions fairly accurately.
We fill prescriptions, fairly, accurately.

4. And these two:

Whenever I am all in, the dark shapes chase me.
Whenever I am all in the dark, shapes chase me.

2th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

You have to know at least seven definitions before you can understand the rules.

The words you have to know the meaning of are: *clause, coordinating conjunction, series, essential, non-essential, set off,* and *appositive.*

What's a CLAUSE?

Not to be confused with claws (or Claus) a CLAUSE is a group of words containing a subject (S) and its verb (V):

S V
car overturned

Some clauses are dependent, meaning they don't communicate clearly by themselves:

S V
Although the car overturned.

Sometimes clauses occur within clauses:

S S V V
The monkey, its eyes flashing angrily, stayed in its cage.

2nd THING (Continued)

What's a COORDINATING CONJUNCTION?

A CONJUNCTION, as the word suggests, is a junction, or joining of two things -- words, phrases, clauses.

A COORDINATING CONJUNCTION is one that refers to the two (or more) things as co-equals (or coordinate). These are the COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: *and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so.*

What's a SERIES?

A series is a bunch (three or more) of words, phrases, or clauses, each of which has the same function in a sentence. That's not as difficult as it sounds. The series are italicized in these examples:

1. (Words) My boyfriend is *tall, dark, and handy.*
2. (Phrases) Our government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people.*
3. (Clauses) We didn't know *who she was, where she came from,* or *what she wanted.*

What's an ESSENTIAL?

Correction -- What's ESSENTIAL? When something's got to be in the sentence for it to make sense, it's ESSENTIAL.

What's NON-ESSENTIAL?

That which can be left out of a sentence.

What's SET OFF?

Separated by commas (or dashes or parentheses) from the rest of the sentence. These examples show the difference between ESSENTIAL and NON-ESSENTIAL and show that non-essential elements are set off from the rest of the sentence:

1. (ESSENTIAL) The girls who were terrified found safety in the cabin. (Only those girls who were terrified were in the cabin.)

2. (NON-ESSENTIAL) The girls, who were terrified, found safety in the cabin. (All the girls ended up in the cabin. The fact that they were terrified is simply extra information and is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Note that the non-essential clause is set off by commas from the rest of the sentence.)

What's an APPOSITIVE?

An APPOSITIVE is a noun or noun phrase immediately following a noun and providing additional information about it. The APPOSITIVES are italicized below:

> John, *the guy I wanted to marry*, lost his job at the car wash. His brother, *the bank president*, looks more handsome every day.

3rd THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

When two independent clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction, use a comma before the conjunction.

- When you see a conjunction (and, or, but, nor, for, yet, so) in any sentence, it may need a comma. Ask yourself, "Does it connect two independent clauses?" If so, put in the comma. The reason for it is that the comma and the conjunction together provide a clear indication to the reader where one clause ends and the other begins.
- Some examples:

  I found my umbrella, but someone had used it up.

  It's very difficult to use an umbrella down, but I'm still upset.

  My car needs new points and plugs, or it won't win the drag race at the stop sign.

  I will ride with either Jan or Sam, and I'll pay for the gas.

- Notice how the lack of a comma creates confusion in these examples:

  The teacher scolded Tom and Bill felt very lucky he had not been noticed OR

  I sent the letter to Tom and Jerry, who thinks I have no other friends, hasn't spoken to me since.

EXCEPTION: If the sentence is very short, the comma is often omitted:

I saw him and I ran away. OR Joe laughed but Charley didn't.

4th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:
Separate elements in a series with commas.

A lot of people argue about this rule, but to be absolutely certain your sentences are clear, this is the rule to use.

These are examples of series:

Every Tom, Dick, and Harry seems to be named John.

On my vacation, I swam in Mazatlan, danced in Rio, hiked in the Andes, and ran out of money in Buenos Aires.

The bicyclists agreed that the road was long, that the day was hot, but that the ride was fun.

EXCEPTION: If OR, NOR, or AND connect all the items in a series, don't use commas:

She sent invitations to her relatives and to her teachers and to her friends.

Here's why *all* the elements in a series should be separated by commas -- note that some of the elements have two items in it. Without any commas it's confusing:

For breakfast the cafe offered pancakes toast coffee ham and eggs and doughnuts and milk.

With commas it's clearer:

For breakfast the cafe offered pancakes, toast, coffee, ham and eggs, and doughnuts and milk.

5th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Separate two or more adjectives modifying the same noun with commas.

- We're assuming here that the adjectives are not joined with a coordinate conjunction.

  Use a comma here: It was a bright, windy day.

  But not here: It was a bright and windy day.

- We're also assuming that the adjectives are equally important.

  Use a comma here: I like a happy, healthy child.

  But not here: He was a confused little boy.

- To determine whether the adjectives are equally important, mentally do two things – reverse the order of the adjectives, and put an *and* between the adjectives; if the meaning of the sentence doesn't change, the adjectives are equally important – and need commas. Let's try it.

  Does this sentence need commas? I enjoy a rough exhausting hard-fought game.

  Now reverse the order of the adjectives:

  . . . a hard-fought, exhausting, rough game.

  Okay, no change in meaning there. Now add *ands*:

  . . . a rough and exhausting and hard-fought game.

No change in meaning that way either. So the sentence needs commas.

Does this sentence need commas?

He needs some good old-fashioned corporal punishment.

Reverse the order:

. . . some corporal old-fashioned good punishment.

Lost the meaning there. Add *ands:*

. . . some good and old-fashioned and corporal punishment.

That changes the meaning too. So both tests indicate the adjectives are not equally important: don't use commas.

- When two or more adjectives occur out of their normal place in a sentence, the adjective series is set off by commas. Use no commas here:

  The sleek and shiny car caught everyone's attention.

  But set off the adjectives here:

  The car, sleek and shiny, caught everyone's attention.

6th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Commas are used to separate most elements in addresses, dates, and measurements.

- Custom, not logic, determines comma usage in this area.
- So memorize the comma use in these correct examples:

  He first called me at 11:30 p.m., Thursday, December 24, 1975, as I was waiting for Santa Claus, Jr., in my father's house at 777 Seventh Street, Apt. 7, Punkett Junction, Utah 83111. I was sitting ten feet, eleven inches from the phone, and I set a speed record getting to the phone which wasn't broken until March, 1976. That's when a homesick Marine leapt a couch eleven feet, three inches long to take a phone call from his 80-year-old fiance.

- Set off *Jr.* and *Sr.* but not numerals following a name. Write "'George III" or Henry Ford II."
- Note that month and date are considered one element. So are house number and street, and state and zip code.
- Many good writers omit the comma between month and year if no date is given:

  January 1976 was a dry month.

- Military custom is to write dates from the smallest unit to the largest with no punctuation.

  December 24, 1975, would be written 24 December 1975."

(In military usage, a four-digit code is used for time of day: "9:30 a.m." is "0930"; noon is "1200"; "6:45 p.m." is "1845." Commonly, the word "hours" follows the number.)

7th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Introductory words, phrases, and clauses are usually set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

- When the introductory element is short and there's no danger of misreading, the comma is sometimes omitted.

- Introductory elements are those which precede (come before) the subject of the sentence. For example:

  Although she confessed, we felt she may have been protecting her friend. OR Singing an old sea chanty, he lurched down the sidewalk. OR Unfortunately, the loot was gone when we got there. OR In fact, I don't think she knew the bank had been robbed. OR Although I have studied all the facts in the case many times, I'm still confused. OR Indeed, it's the most confusing case I've seen.

  EXCEPTION: When the verb comes before its subject, an introductory prepositional phase is not followed by a comma. So:

  At the sound of the siren, all students will walk to the exit.

  BUT Out of the night came the fire truck.

  (NOTE that *fire truck*, the subject, follows *came*, its verb.)

8th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:
Set off appositives with commas.

First, review the definitions of "appositive" on page 9. Then look at these examples:

> Ludlow Laidback, the famous rat raiser, addressed the crowd. His speech, a very graphic one, sickened several people. Jane, my best friend, said afterward that she would never eat rat again.

- But if the noun or noun phrase is used as an adjective, it's not set off:

  > Famous rat raiser Ludlow Laidback addressed the crowd. His very graphic speech sickened several people. My best friend Jane said afterward that she would never eat rat again.

9th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Set off non-essential clauses with commas; do not set off essential clauses.

- "Non-essential" clauses are also called "non-restrictive"; "essential" clauses are also called "restrictive."
- If the clause *simply provides additional information,* it is *non-essential* and, therefore, *is* set off by commas. Try reading the sentence and omitting the clause. For example:

  Jimmy, the little boy who is visiting our neighbors, stole the pie.

  If you read it without the clause, it says, "Jimmy . . . stole the pie." That makes sense, so the clause is *non-essential.* What do you do with a non-essential clause? You set it off with commas.
- If the clause is *necessary* to the meaning of the sentence, it is *essential* and is *not* set off.

  The little boy who is visiting our neighbors stole the pie.

  Who stole the pie? In the first example, the thief is Jimmy; the clause simply gives us additional information about him. In the second example, the thief is "the little boy who is visiting our neighbors." So the clause is essential. You *do not* set it off with commas.
- But sometimes you can't decide just by leaving out the clause. Whether you use, or don't use, commas depends upon what you really mean. Compare these two examples:

  1. The coach who had never played football drove the team to victory.
  2. The coach, who had never played football, drove the team to victory.

The first example implies that there are several coaches, but that the one who drove the team to victory is the one who had never played football. The second example implies that there is only one coach doing the driving; the fact that he (or she) (why not?) had never played football is simply additional information.

Compare the following examples. Which one suggests that there are several Girl Scouts?

1. The Girl Scout who was in charge of the group led the way into the cave.
2. The Girl Scout, who was in charge of the group, led the way into the cave.

Compare these examples. Which one suggests that the bank has no more officers?

1. The bank officers, who were convicted of perjury, were removed from the board.
2. The bank officers who were convicted of perjury were removed from the board.

All the above examples are adjective clauses (they modify nouns). Most adverbial clauses (i.e., clauses that modify verbs) are considered essential – if they follow the main clause in a sentence. (See introductory clauses – 7th Thing, p. 15.) For example:

We went because we were ordered to go. Jimmy waited until the house was dark.

Clauses which add a reason or concession are often set off by commas, even when they're not introductory. For example:

I gave him some money, although I doubt he will appreciate it. OR She threw away the letter, since she couldn't decide how to answer it.

10th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES

Set off interrupters with commas (or parentheses) - or dashes.

- Set off with commas:

  Interrupters, as you might have guessed, interrupt the flow of the sentence.

- Set off with parentheses:

  Interrupters (as you might have guessed) interrupt the flow of the sentence.

- Set off with dashes:

  Interrupters – as you might have guessed – interrupt the flow of the sentence.

- Sometimes the interrupter is one word, sometimes a phrase or clause. For example:

  We were not, however, prepared for this outburst of profanity. It was, it seemed to us, totally without cause. We expected, on the other hand, some reaction. Tears, for example, would have been understandable.

- Although commas are the most common means of setting off interrupters, a writer can sometimes choose parentheses or dashes. For example:

  1. The committee members, both men and women, voted for the Equal Rights Amendment.
  2. The committee members -- both men and women – voted for the ERA.
  3. The committee members (both men and women) voted for the ERA.

  (NOTE: The dashes seem to emphasize the interrupter, while the parentheses suggest it's simply additional information.

11th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Set off words or phrases of direct address with commas.

- What's *direct address?* It's what happens when you address directly the person or persons you're talking to. Like this:

  1. Mary, you simply must practice your guitar lesson.
  2. Please, sir, do not strike me again.
  3. Call me, friend, whenever you're in town.

NOTE the change in meaning in number 3 if the commas are omitted.)

- Dashes are often used to set off interrupters which already contain commas. For example:

  Mrs. Reed – weary, pale, and trembling – slipped to the floor.

- Dashes are also used to set off interrupters which cause an abrupt break in the flow of the sentence. For example:

  Shirley is too mischievous, too rebellious, too sharp-tongued – it hurts me to tell you this! – for life in a sorority house.

  Shirley is too pure, too naive, too sensitive – I suspect you already know this! – for life in a convent.

- Parentheses usually set off supplementary, interpretive, or explanatory interrupters. For example:

  1. The ancient law applied to all Romans (both free and slave).
  2. This ancient law applied to all Romans. (Some were free; some were slave.)

  NOTE: The punctuation mark follows the parentheses in the first example. But when the parenthetical expression is a complete sentence by itself (as in the second example), the punctuation mark is inside the final parentheses.

12th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Set off interrupters in direct quotations with commas.

- The interrupters range from a simple "He said" to a long phrase or clause. For example:

  1. "My darling," he said, "will marry me whenever I ask her."
  2. "My darling," said he, as he thumbed casually through his book of addresses and phone numbers, "will marry me whenever I ask her."

- Note that commas (and periods) always are placed inside the quote marks.

  ALWAYS: "More rain," said she.

  NEVER: "More rain", said she.

13th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:
A comma is often used in place of an omitted verb.

- This comma usage is similar to the use of an apostrophe to replace a letter in a contraction. As an apostrophe can replace a letter, a comma can replace a word. For example:

  Billy Jo likes tennis; Dorothy, skating.

  Some people have several homes; others, none.

14th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:
Sometimes a comma is needed simply for clarity.

- When two identical words occur next to each other, a comma between them can help make the sentence easier to understand. For example:

  Whatever is, is good.

- BUT often two *thats* occur together. They're seldom separated. For example:

  I know that that man stole my skates.

- In fact, a series of that's like this one, amazingly enough, wouldn't need any commas:

  I thought that that "that that" that that teacher used was wrong.

- A sentence with a compound verb in which the first verb precedes a compound complement (the "complements" are printed in italics) often needs a comma to reduce the chance of misreading.

  The car I want must have a powerful *engine* and a stereo *tape deck*, and must be very inexpensive.

- Contrasted elements are usually set off with commas. These elements often begin with *but* or *not*.

  He was told that he should consider her offer, not that he should accept it immediately.

  I'll go back to Henry, but only on my terms.

- Sentences with a "The more, the merrier" construction have commas. For example:

  The stupider the movie, the longer the line.

15th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

Dashes can be used to introduce or summarize a listing.

- A formal listing usually follows a colon; a dash suggests a less formal construction. For example:

  She was a great girl – warm, understanding, witty, and rich.

- A dash, never a colon, would follow and summarize a listing. For example:

  He was talkative, demanding, and rude – in a word, a boor.

16th THING TO KNOW ABOUT COMMAS, DASHES, AND PARENTHESES:

A general rule about the comma - when in doubt, leave it out!

- More hard-to-read writing is the result of too many commas than too few. If a comma is not demanded, or at least permitted, by the guidelines in this manual -- and if the meaning is clear without a comma -- don't use it.
- Don't separate a subject and its verb unless there's a reason to. For example:

  Sam Jones who is married, is my lawyer.

  If "who is married" is necessary to tell which Sam Jones, it's an essential clause and shouldn't be set off at all. If it's a non-essential clause, it needs commas in back and in front of it.
- Don't separate a noun from the adjective just in front of it with a comma. For example, this is okay:

  It was a bleak, windy, cold day.

  But this is not okay:

  He was a shrewd, conniving, miserly, tycoon.

  The comma before "tycoon" just doesn't make sense.

Tasks for Practice

TASK 1 –

Add commas, as necessary in the following sentences: (If your instructor directs, write the number of the guideline – 3rd through 14th – which tells why the comma is necessary. There could be more than one number per comma.)

1. He gave her a ring which was a mistake on his part but he felt rightly or wrongly that no other woman would have him.
2. In spite of her parents' objections they got married and settled down and then the problems began.
3. Lois the six foot 200 pound bride hated cooking mending cleaning and ironing and Ferd her new husband was amazed.
4. He seemed to think that even though he couldn't stand any of those activities himself all women enjoyed them.
5. Although Lois screamed cried and slit her wrists Ferd simply locked up all sharp objects.
6. Ferd who was not very bright told Lois that they would move to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Washington D.C. on January 20 1981.

TASK 1 (continued)

7. "There" he said "the servants do all the work and my sweet little wife can if she wishes do nothing."
8. Lois confused and angry asked her understanding patient mother for advice.
9. Her mother who knew all about such things said that Lois should cook Ferd one more dish something he liked.
10. "The longer you wait the harder the act" said she.
11. "My first husband liked kumquats; my second dandelion greens. But pinto beans are best because they increase the appetite."
12. And that dear reader is the touching warm story of Lois and Ferd and her mother who often visits Lois in the kitchen told it to me.
13. Que sera sera.
14. So Lois bought some pinto beans and a Betty Crocker cookbook and fixed a very special dinner.

TASK 2 – Fun with commas

1. Check the sentence that shows amazing powers of persuasion:
   ____ I left him convinced he was a fool.
   ____ I left him, convinced he was a fool.

2. Check the sentence that denies that politics influenced the appointment.
   ____ Joan did not get the appointment, because she was a Socialist.
   ____ Joan did not get the appointment because she was a Socialist.

3. Check the sentence that endorses all Republican candidates;
   ____ The President asked voters to elect Republican senators, who would support his programs fully.
   ____ The President asked voters to elect Republican senators who would support his programs fully.

4. Check the sentence that calls for very strong children:
   ____ I watched the parade of 200 children, carrying banners, and several elected officials.
   ____ I watched the parade of 200 children, carrying banners and several elected officials.

5. Check the sentence that suggests cannibalism.
   ____ We will eat, John, and then we'll go to the concert.
   ____ We will eat John, and then we'll go to the concert.

6. Check the sentence which refers to the older clerk:

____ A pretty, young clerk took my money.

____ A pretty young clerk took my money.

7. Check the sentence which suggests Mr. Lucas may want to divorce his wife:

____ Mr. Lucas, who was recently attacked by international terrorists and his wife, arrived home today.

____ Mr. Lucas, who was recently attacked by international terrorists, and his wife arrived home today.

8. Check the sentence which suggests a difficult gymnastic feat:

____ Do not break your bread, or roll in your soup.

____ Do not break your bread or roll in your soup.

9. Check the question which is insulting:

____ What's the latest dope?

____ What's the latest, dope?

The Test

(for Objectives 1 through 16)

For Objective 1 – Check the sentences that are true about the use of commas, dashes, and parentheses.

_____ a. Commas set off sentence elements that interrupt the flow of a sentence.
_____ b. Commas separate elements whose relationship would be unclear without them.
_____ c. Parentheses are used to set off essential material.
_____ d. Commas are used to set off essential material.
_____ e. Dashes are used to set off material which deserves special emphasis.
_____ f. Commas are common, important, and difficult.

For Objective 2 – Match:

_____ a. Essential
_____ b. Clause
_____ c. Set off
_____ d. Coordinating conjunction
_____ e. Series
_____ f. Appositive
_____ g. Non-essential

(1) Refers to two or more things as co-equals.
(2) Has to be in a sentence.
(3) Has subject and verb.
(4) Elements with the same function in a sentence.
(5) Doesn't have to be in sentence.
(6) Noun or noun phrase.
(7) What is done to a non-essential element.

For Objective 3 – Circle the commas and coordinating conjunctions which correctly separate independent clauses; "X" out the incorrectly separated independent clauses (see the examples):

Example: *I went to town, but all the stores were closed.*
Example: *I love you I want to marry you.*

a. He looked frantically through his drawers for he was certain the money was in one of them.
b. Two is company, but three is a crowd.
c. Give her credit for her boldness or admit that she is simply stupid.
d. I bought a battered, shabby, old car, it was just what I wanted for my fishing trip.
e. Last night I saw Gene and Harry had seen Viola the night before.
f. Two years ago we were told that each of us would receive an increase in pay but now everyone of the managers refuses to discuss the matter.
g. We tried but we failed.
h. The book is an excellent one, and I'm sure all of you will enjoy it.

For Objective 4 – Add commas wherever necessary in these sentences with series:

a. The wind was strong the roads were muddy and the scenery was depressing.
b. He is a talented witty handsome man.
c. I took a trip through Colorado and Wyoming and Utah.
d. They spent the summer playing tennis riding horses running races and digging clams.
e. The day was sunny warm and humid.
f. We traveled from the mountains to the prairies to the ocean and to the poorhouse.

For Objective 5 – Add commas where necessary in these sentences containing two or more adjectives modifying the same noun.

a. Of all the low-down sneaky malicious schemes I've ever heard, I like yours best.

b. Off into the clear blue sky roared the long sleek shiny airplane.

c. I find TV commercials boring and tasteless and insulting.

d. He's a delightful little man.

For Objective 6 – Check the sentences which are correctly punctuated:

___ a. Do you know anyone born on February 3, 1972 in Biloxi, Mississippi?

___ b. Richard Small IV and Paul Stillson, Jr., live at 3303 Euclid Street, Knoxville, Kentucky 30111.

___ c. That garage is 20 feet, 7 inches long and 13 feet, 2 inches wide.

___ d. The lieutenant wrote us that the tragedy had occurred at 1400 hours on 27 May 1973.

For Objective 7 – Check those sentences which contain correctly punctuated introductory elements:

___ a. For as long as I would remember, the house on Broadway had been home.

___ b. Whatever the cause the result, much as we dislike it, is popular.

___ c. Pushing his bicycle, the boy trudged homeward.

___ d. Into the setting sun, the horseman rode with his victim.

___ e. Into the setting sun, rode the horseman and his victim.

___ f. Actually the victim was happy, to escape from her father.

For Objective 8 – Set off the appositives with commas:

a. Joe the club's current president and head of the nominating committee opened the business meeting.
b. My good friend Maria gave the treasurer's report.
c. Then Steve the club's unofficial troublemaker moved that he be named Official Troublemaker.
d. The Club members good sports that they are passed the motion unanimously.
e. Then the President-Elect John moved that Steve's membership be terminated.
f. Then the Vice-President-Elect Suzanne rose to defend Steve.
g. Steve a really nasty guy hit Suzanne in the eye.
h. The motion a popular one now passed unanimously.

For Objective 9 – Check the sentences which contain non-essential italicized elements (those needing to be set off by commas):

___ a. Students *who study* get good grades.
___ b. The boy *who was afraid of being punished* hurried home.
___ c. The girl *who is holding the newspaper* is Margaret.
___ d. Ernest Hemingway *who wrote "Farewell to Arms"* is my favorite novelist.
___ e. People *who have poor eyesight* should not drive.
___ f. The Erie Canal *which was opened in 1825* was over 350 miles long.
___ g. The moon *which I can see from my bedroom window* fascinates me.
___ h. Boys *who cry* are often punished.

For Objective 10 – In the blanks, write C if the italicized element should be set off by commas, P if the italicized elements should be set off by parentheses, D if the italicized elements should be set off by dashes. Some blanks may need all three letters:

____ a. Every survivor *man, woman, and child* was given a hot meal.

____ b. It is *therefore* our only course of action.

____ c. Some people *believe it or not!* will not cross a bridge after dark.

____ d. It is true that bridges *most roads have them* are as strong in the dark as in the light.

____ e. Emergencies *whatever their cause* demand prompt action.

____ f. The weather *gray, raw, and unpleasant* ruined our picnic plans.

For Objective 11 – Check the sentences correctly punctuated:

___ a. You'll never make it home tonight Mary.

___ b. Susan will take you home with her.

___ c. And you, friend, may sleep on the couch.

___ d. Listen everyone to me.

___ e. Please, Manny, don't go out in the storm.

___ f. I've called your mother Sarah, and she won't expect you home.

For Objective 12 – Check the sentences correctly punctuated:

___ a. "You," said the officer, "are going to get a ticket."

___ b. "But I didn't see the stop sign, officer" I said plaintively.

___ c. "That's not an excuse", replied the officer as he began writing out the ticket.

CE 005 825

___ d. "I think it's unfair," said Jim, "because that stop sign wasn't there yesterday."
___ e. "Oh, yes, it was said the officer, "and you saw it."
___ f. "I think" I said "that what I didn't see was you, officer."

For Objective 13 – Check the sentences correctly punctuated:

___ a. Sam is a bully; Jim a show-off.
___ b. I want to live near the ocean; Sherry, in the mountains.
___ c. Joan found the treasure she'd been seeking, Judy, nothing.

For Objective 14 – Add commas wherever necessary:

a. What it was was a mess!
b. I tried to help her not hurt her.
c. The taller the better!
d. She found her scarf and hat and lost them again.
e. I'll speak to him but not nicely.
f. I found that that was easy.

For Objective 15 – Check the sentences which use the dash correctly.

___ a. It was a great picnic – good weather, beautiful scenery, delicious food.
___ b. She wanted wealth, fame, talent, in other words – success.
___ c. The wreck was spectacular, flames, screams – crushed metal.

For Objective 16 – In a brief sentence, tell what you should do when you're not sure whether to insert a comma.